

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 27, 2025

CONTACT

Clarice Knelly, Communications Coordinator
321-254-9453 ext. 418
cknelly@brevardzoo.org



MEDIA ADVISORY

Invitation to Cover Manatee Release at Blue Spring State Park

MELBOURNE, Fla., May 27, 2025 — Brevard Zoo's first manatee rehabilitation patient, Churro, is being released in Blue Spring State Park at 10 a.m. on June 3. There will also be a ribbon-cutting celebrating a newly built manatee release ramp. Churro will be the first manatee to be released using the new ramp.

All media personnel must **RSVP to communications coordinator Clarice Knelly by Friday, May 30 at 12 p.m.** if you plan on attending. Upon arrival, please check in with Save the Manatee Club's Cora Berchem or a member of the Zoo's communications team. There will be a designated spot for media. Please note, this is **not** a public event. The release will be held rain or shine, but for safety reasons may be rescheduled if there's lightning in the area.

Churro, along with another manatee named Randa, were brought to Brevard Zoo by SeaWorld Orlando shortly after the new Manatee Rehabilitation Center opened in April. Churro, named for her sweet personality, was initially rescued in May of 2022 by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) and partners after her mom, Reckless, was struck by a large vessel following Churro's birth. Both Reckless and Churro were transported to SeaWorld Orlando for rehabilitation. After Churro's initial rehabilitation, release and eventual relocation, this manatee was doing well until late 2024 when she was noted to be losing weight. Members from the Manatee Rescue and Rehabilitation Partnership (MRP) rescued Churro and assessed her health. Once it was clear Churro just needed some extra care and nutrition, the three-year-old manatee was transferred to Brevard Zoo.

"We are so excited to be able to release Churro," said conservation manager Becca Downey. "Her presence at the Zoo's Manatee Rehabilitation Center brought joy to all who got to see her, and she'll always be part of our story."

Churro was given a routine medical exam prior to her release, and she is now at a healthy weight of 680 pounds. Her pool-mate, Randa, is not yet ready to be released, but she will soon be sharing space with a new manatee patient. Brevard Zoo will share more details soon.

For more information regarding the newly built manatee release ramp, please reach out to Cora Berchem at cberchem@savethemanatee.org. For a more detailed description of Churro's background, please read [Brevard Zoo's blog post](#).

###

Brevard Zoo is home to more than 900 animals representing 195 species from all over the world. As a not-for-profit organization, it is a leader in the fields of animal wellness, education and conservation. More information is available at www.brevardzoo.org